

LITERARY LANDSCAPE

Nomination forms for Montana Poet Laureate available January 1

The Montana Poet Laureate is a position created by the Montana Legislature, which recognizes and honors a citizen poet of exceptional talent and accomplishment. Applications for the state's next Poet Laureate are due in the Montana Arts Council office by 5 p.m. Friday, April 1.

In 2005, Sandra Alcosser became the first Montana Poet Laureate and served for two years. Greg Pape was selected as the second Poet Laureate in 2007, followed by Henry Real Bird in 2009, and Sheryl Noethe, who will serve until the summer of 2013.

The Montana Arts Council encourages nominations of poets from all walks of life, and all poetry forms are welcome. Montanans may nominate a poet for the Poet Laureate position, or learn more about eligibility requirements, the application process and the Poet Laureate program at: art.mt.gov/resources/resources_plposition.asp.

The term of service for the position is two years and the award is honorific. The Montana Arts Council will convene a panel of poets and literary experts, among others, to select three finalists from among the nominations. These names will be submitted to the Montana Arts Council for approval and finalization. The Poet Laureate of Montana will then be chosen by the Governor from among these nominees in the summer of 2013.

The Poet Laureate will be chosen on the basis of three criteria:

- Excellence as evidenced by the submitted poetry samples;
- Exemplary professionalism as evidenced by an established history of substantial and significant publication and special honors, awards, fellowships, or other recognition; and
- Advancement of poetry in Montana communities.

For further information, please call or email Kim Baraby Hurtle: 406-444-6639, khurtle@mt.gov.

MONTANA POET LAUREATE

Dimly Lit Ballrooms

by Sheryl Noethe



Photo by Kurt Wilson

1. The Dark Matter

Women in white dresses dance with men
wearing black tuxedos in dimly lit ballrooms
all you see is the whirling skirts of spinning women,
but you know the partners are there.
This is one way of searching for black holes;
Non-reflective fellows who reveal nothing.
They have their reasons, I'm sure.
One thing we know –
They cannot stop waltzing.

2. The Future

Like water crystallizes into ice
The past, bound to Euclid, reflects and refracts,
Blindly freezes into the now.

3. Black Bodies

Theoretical bodies, approximated by a hollow sphere,
Absorb all incident radiation and reflect none.
We have many such people lying in our streets.
They do not shine in the world.
They are a presence, barely noticeable,
yet when they die another giant sun supernovas into oblivion,
the only evidence streaming gamma rays
and explosions of atomic force.
However, in our cities we have no problem simply stepping
Over them. We offer suggestions for employment.
We ask them to jump over their own shadows.



21

Library of Congress offers access to Joe Smith interviews

In 1988, John Lennon's wife Yoko Ono gave a candid interview to record-label president Joe Smith about the Beatles' split: "For John, it was a divorce. I think he was feeling very good about it, as if a big weight was off him."

Ono was among more than 200 celebrated performers, producers and industry leaders whose words Smith captured on audiotape more than 25 years ago in an effort to document the oral history of popular music.

In June 2012, Smith donated the collection of recordings to the Library of Congress – a tremendous assembly of primary-source oral histories covering perhaps the most important 50 years of popular music, nationally and internationally. The library has made a series of these revealing, unedited recordings available for listening free to the public on its website at www.loc.gov/rr/record/joesmith/.

The first group of recordings posted on the site consists of 25 interviews, including conversations with Tony Bennett, Paul McCartney, Yoko Ono, Ray Charles, B. B. King, Bo Diddley and Linda Ronstadt. More recordings in the Smith collection will be added to the site over time.

Cedilla: A Missoula journal of art and ideas

By Casey Charles

Cedilla will publish its sixth edition before the end of 2012. Why is this news? In large part because of the quality of writing the journal of art, poetry and prose contains each year. And in part because of the story of its founders and the subsequent lead editors who have worked to keep this people's press alive, going through the thick and thin of soliciting and reading submissions, planning and printing layout, and finally celebrating and selling each new edition.

Ç6 will soon be ready to read, with 100-130 copies available at local bookstores and the launch party and reading in February. The journal will also be available upon request at cedillasix@gmail.com.

This year's edition features poets and writers from Toronto to San Francisco, from undergraduates to emeritus faculty, and from the unpublished to authors of several books. Most importantly, the works in this edition of *Cedilla* will make good reading – and good thinking.

The mission of Missoula's homegrown journal has nothing to do with *who* and everything to do with *what*. It has nothing to do with vanity and everything to do with intellectual humility, with dedication to words that grab, works that provoke and expand.

In the kitchen-table conversations that started this "lit-rag" in 2007, Tim Cook, Pete

Clavin and others – students of poets from Black Mountain and in Black Arts – decided to "find the current" in River City, to put together a journal that reflected the way writers were thinking – not just about the world of the Old Post and Charlie B's but also about new takes on the world of language poetry.

That's the way all good ideas start – around a table. Talking about the politics of Pound, about the election, about the next reading at Shakespeare's. *Cedilla* came from that kernel, from this corner of Montana – a place of writers. But it also came from students who studied poetry as much as they wrote it, who studied philosophy and read Dante. Like the diacritical *cedilla* itself, which brings languages together through a hook, Ç the journal crosses generic, aesthetic and geographical boundaries.

Cedilla started eclectic, and so it continues. After Tim Cook got the first edition off the

ground in 2007, a new lead editor took over production of succeeding annual editions. Each year has brought its own aesthetic, its own cover, its own set of funding problems. Whose credit card would pay for the binding, the cover art? How much to

charge for a copy?

Outside support was scarce – a few hundred from the university on occasion, a dona-

**Open your mouth
Button your lip
The cave, the gob-hole
The whole of it, a blue flame
Blows out the flickering wicks
Wind, water, light
Rolls through the mind**

– from "Derailed" by Mark Gibbons

Ç

Cedilla lead editors:

2007	Tim Cook
2008	Cab Tran
2009	Mike Wanzanried
2010	Peter Clavin
2011	Mark Gibbons
2012	Casey Charles

tion from a poet now and then, a hat passed at a launch party. Each year Ç shook the money tree; each year the fruit came from the backyards of writers – laborers in the vineyard of art and ideas. Dedication to the dissemination of artistic expression continues to be the journal's major supporter.

So in its sixth edition *Cedilla* continues the tradition of linking different tongues, of bringing together the local with the international, the avant garde with the rear guard. This edition keeps the dream alive, the conviction that writing communities can flourish in Montana and communicate with poets around the world.

The content of Ç6 includes art, photography, short stories, essays and poetry, compiling the work of Canadians, Texans, Californians, Montanans and Missoulians. The current still runs deep and far and after six years, Tim, Peter and the editors know the river will continue to flow.